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AN EXPLANATION OF THE *African*-Company's Property IN THE Sole Trade to *Africa*,

Making their RIGHT equal with any Subject's RIGHT to his Freehold.

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Do unto the Company and their Property, as you would have others do unto you, and your Estates.

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An Explanation *of the* African-*Company's Right and Property in the* African *Trade. And of the Merit and Value of that Property. Both which will appear from theſe Facts and Conſiderations.*

I. THAT the *African* Trade was often attempted, but could never be gain'd, and was *abſolutely loſt*, when the Company undertook the hazard of the Purchaſe.

II. That the Forts and Trade *are inſeparable*; That the Trade without the Forts could never be gained, nor can now be maintain'd; And the Forts without the Trade, had never been thought

of, much leſs had been built or preſerved at ſuch a vaſt Expence, as has been laid out upon them.

III. That the Company are *Purchaſers* of both Forts and Trade, not only for an Immenſe Conſideration, *but at the hazard of Loſing the whole in the Adventure*, which makes their Right and Property *equal* to any Gentleman's Title to his Freehold or Leaſehold in *England*, or in the Plantations.

IV. That the *African* Company's Right and Property in the ſole Trade, *is no Monopoly*, nor Diſcouragement to Induſtry, *nor Injurious* to the Liberty or Freedom of their Fellow Subjects of *Great Britain* or the Plantations.

V. The preſent value of the *African* Company's Intereſt in the ſole Trade, and the true Reaſons why their Eſtate and Credit are at this time low.

VI. The Nature of that Right the Legiſlature has, to take Care of the Management of the *African* Trade.

I. As to the Firſt, *That the* African *Trade was often attempted, but could never be gained, and was abſolutely loſt, when the Company undertook the hazard of the Purchaſe.*

This

This Fact the Company are ready to prove, for there were three ſeveral ſets of Adventurers, the Firſt in 1618, the Second in 1631, and the Third in 1662, who, upon Condition of having the Sole Trade, adventured with Great Stocks, to enlarge the *Engliſh* Dominions, and gain the *African* Trade, *but all of them miſcarried*, and particularly the laſt of them were abſolutely beaten out, and *ruin'd by the* Dutch, *under Admiral* d' Ruyter, *in* 1665. and the Trade lay *abſolutely* loſt for Six or Seven Years, until 1672. when the preſent Royal *African-Company* undertook the adventure, to conquer and gain the Trade.

II. As to the Second, *That the Forts and Trade are inſeparable; that the Trade without the Forts, could never be gain'd, nor can now be maintain'd, and the Forts without the Trade had never been thought of, much leſs had been built or preſerved at ſuch a vaſt Expence, as has been laid out on them.*

The Neceſſity of Forts to carry on the Trade is *publickly owned*; that Neceſſity is apparent: For the Country is Barbarous, Perfidious, Bloody and Cruel. Can it be imagin'd therefore, that the Trade could be at firſt gain'd

without Building thoſe Forts and Caſtles? Can any Man tell what Uſe or Profit can be made of the Forts and Caſtles, beſides the gaining and ſecuring the Trade? If not, does it not then plainly follow, that the *Forts and the Trade are inſeparable?* Whoever has the one muſt be Owner of the other.

III. As to the Third, *That the Company are Purchaſers of both Forts and Trade, not only for an immenſe Conſideration, but at the hazard of Loſing the whole in the Adventure, which makes their Right and Property therefore equal to any Gentleman's Title to his Freehold or Leaſehold in* England, *or in the Plantations.*

The Trade being abſolutely loſt, a certain Number of Noble Men, Gentlemen, Merchants and Planters, propoſed to adventure in Regaining it, and to raiſe a Stock. The Undertaking *was ſo diſcouraging and hazardous*, that the Books lay open Nine Months for Subſcriptions, and then One Hundred and Eleven Thouſand Pounds was ſubſcribed, and afterwards the Company borrowed great Sums of Money of their Fellow Subjects.

Theſe Adventurers *ſtipulated with the Crown*, to undertake the Conqueſt, and enlarge

enlarge the *Engliſh* Dominions at their own Charge, and to build Forts and Caſtles, and to gain and ſecure the Trade, *upon Condition to have that Trade ſolely to themſelves.*

King *Charles* the Second by Lettters Patents, declares that many Attempts had been made, but that all Endeavours had proved ineffectual. He therefore, in Conſideration of the Company's Undertaking the Conqueſt, and Gaining the Trade, granted to them, all the Coaſt of *Africa*, from *Cape Blanco* to the *Cape* of *Good-Hope*, *and the ſole Trade thereof Excluſive*, for One Thouſand Years, and erected a Court of Judicature there, to hear and determine all Wrongs, Injuries, *&c.* 1672.

The Company with their own Stock, and with the Moneys borrowed of their Fellow Subjects, *and at the hazard of Loſing the whole, if unſucceſsful*, adventured, with great Induſtry in the Undertaking, they ſucceeded, they conquered the Coaſts, Built Forts on the Continent, Gain'd the Trade, they ſold to certain Advantage, bought Cheap, furniſh'd Negroes to the Plantations at Low Rates, drew home much Gold, and coined it at the Tower, beſides o-

ther valuable Merchandize; they flouriſhed, and began to reimburſe themſelves.

'Can any one ſay, That the King of 'England, is not ſole Proprietor of ſuch 'Lands, and the ſole Trade of it, that 'he conquers at his own Charges in a 'Barbarous Country, or that he may 'not grant it to which of his Subjects 'he pleaſes? Is not the Subject a me'ritorious Purchaſer of a new Trade, 'when he, at his own Charges, adven'tures to Conquer, meerly to gain it, 'and upon Condition to have the 'Trade entirely to himſelf? Was not 'the Adventure Great? Was not there 'a Hazard of Loſing the whole? Can 'any Right or Property be founded on 'greater Merit, Juſtice or Equity? Can 'any *Engliſh* Subject ſhew a better 'Title to his Freehold or Leaſehold pur'chaſed with his Money? *What Difference is there between the Caſe of the Company and the Planters in* Barbadoes, Carolina, Maryland *or* Penſilvania, *but this, that thoſe in* America, *Plant to gain the Fruits of the Ground, and the Company Conquer'd and Fortify'd in* Africa, *to gain the Trade of the Country:* 'But are not the Com'pany's and Planter's Right and Pro-

'perty

'perty the ſame? Do not they both 'depend on Grants from the Crown, 'for the ſame Conſideration of Adven-'tures, and hazard to enlarge the *En-'gliſh* Dominions?

IV. As to the Fourth, *That the* African *Company's Right and Property in the ſole Trade, is no Monopoly, nor a Diſcouragement to Induſtry, nor injurious to the Liberty or Freedom of their Fellow Subjects of* Great Britain *or the Plantations.*

A Monopoly is a reſtraint of ſome Liberty or Trade that the Subject had before. Now in this Caſe, there was no Trade to *Africa*, and conſequently no liberty to Trade. Antecedent to any Trade, it was firſt neceſſary to conquer and build Forts to gain that Trade.

And ſuch Conqueſts and Fortifications cannot be made by any Subject, without the Royal Authority, and therefore when one or more Subjects ſtipulate with the Royal Authority, to undertake, at their own Charges, to conquer and build Forts in a Barbarous Country, and gain a new Trade, that never was before, nor ever would have been gained without ſuch an Adventure, upon Condition to have that

new

new Trade intire to themſelves for a term of Years. *Can any Man call this a Monopoly, or a Diſcouragement to Induſtry* ? On the contrary, is it not a great Encouragement to Induſtry ? Will not a diſturbance of it be a great Diſcouragement to Induſtry? Would the Company have been Induſtrious, if they had foreſeen their Purchaſe ſhould be taken away under the Pretence of a Monopoly ? How can the Company's Enjoyment of their Adventure and Purchaſe (which happened to proſper and ſucceed) be injurious to the Liberty or Freedom of their fellow Subjects of *Great Britain*, or the Plantations? *What if the Company had Miſcarried and loſt all, Is there any Law or Equity to compel their fellow Subjects to ſhare in their Loſs? If not, Is there any Law or Reaſon that Intitles their fellow Subjects to ſhare in the Profit?*

V. As to the Fifth, *The preſent Value of the* African-*Company's Intereſt in the ſole Trade, and the true Reaſons why their Eſtate and Credit are, at this time, low.*

The true Reaſons of the *African*-Company's preſent Misfortunes are three,

1. The Calamities of the War that followed the Revolution, fell heavy on the Company, the *French* taking their Ships and Goods, to a very great Value.

But this they could have retrieved.

2. The Invaſion and forcible Entries of the Interlopers, which prov'd a worſe Plundering than the *French* Depredations; *Yet this they could have avoided.*

3. But the moſt grievous blow of all, was that *hard Law* made in 1697, which gave liberty to other Subjects, in the Nature of Lodgers or Inmates, to enter the Company's Forts and Settlements, and take the benefit of the Trade, for the ſpace of thirteen Years, paying a ſmall Rent of 10 *per Cent.* out of the Exports, only to keep the Company's Houſes in good repair for theſe New Gueſts.

This ſtroke has held the Company under aſſured Bondage; they have groaned and languiſhed under the Weight of it theſe thirteen Years. It forced them to ſtand by quietly, and ſee the Separate Traders (*like the Sequeſtrators formerly*) domineer in the Company's Houſes, and devour the Profit of their Trade. But was it not an Invaſion

vaſion of Property? Would the Company have adventured their Subſtance in gaining the Trade, if they had foreſeen this taking away of the Fruit of their Labours, Purchaſe and Hazard, and the giving it to their fellow Subjects, for nò other Reaſon, but becauſe they coveted, deſired and asked it?

As to the preſent Value of the Company's Intereſt in the Trade.

They inſiſt that their Eſtates being now returning into their Poſſeſſion from under a long Sequeſtration; it will (when free) be of a Value equal to all their Diſburſements and Adventures; it will (when in Poſſeſſion) give them Credit, and means to improve it, and enable them to make to their Creditors full Satisfaction.

They inſiſt, that the Fallacy touching the Value, as if they had no Intereſt, but what muſt ariſe from the Forts and Caſtles, *as ſuch only*, ſhall not be impoſed on them; they claim the Value of the Trade, and inſiſt, that no Value can be put on the Forts, but what is the Value of the Trade; for the Trade is the Fruit or Jewel appendant in thoſe Forts and Caſtles, and was gained by them, and without which,

which, thoſe Forts and Caſtles had never been built, at the prodigious Expences that have been laid out on them.

The Company humbly hope therefore, that their Long-ſufferings and Oppreſſion occaſion'd by the aforeſaid hard Law, ſhall now end and expire, and be buried with it.

VI. As to the Sixth, *The Nature of that Right, the Legiſlature has to take Care, that the* African *Trade, or any other Subjects Trade, be uſed or managed for the Good of the Kingdom.*

As to this the Company humbly ſubmit to ſuch Regulations as to the Exporting Manufactures and Merchandize from *Great Britain*, and furniſhing ſufficient Quantities of Negroes to the Plantations at reaſonable Rates, and preventing Abuſes: As the Legiſlature, in their great Wiſdom ſhall think fit to direct (ſaving that their Right and Property to the ſole Trade be not impoveriſhed, or taken from them.) The Company have ſuſtain'd much Hardſhip and Damage, but have behav'd

hav'd themſelves peaceably: If any Miſdemeanors were laid to their Charge, they might expect the benefit of a fair Tryal; *But to be Demoliſh'd, to be Confiſcated, to be Condemned as the worſt of Malefactors, and their Eſtates taken from them, to the utter Ruin of them, their Creditors and their Families, without Fault, without Crime, without Forfeiture, without Tryal, is ſo contrary to Natural Juſtice, ſo unprecedented, ſo ſhocking to Free-born Subjects*, That the Company humbly hope they have no juſt Reaſon to fear any ſuch thing from *This* Parliament.

F I N I S.